how lucky are we? (to have so much to lose)
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Jemma Simmons, Leo Fitz, Skye | Daisy Johnson, mentions of others, Original Non-Binary Character

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Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Fluff, Hurt/Comfort, Post-Framework Universe (Marvel), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con, Implied Mind Rape, holy shit that's a tag?? because it's certainly applicable, Didn't Know They Were Dating, they are my Challengers, POV Jemma Simmons, Jemma Simmons Has No Chill, like. ever., featuring Fitz and Daisy working out their canon issues FULLY in the background, like Jemma truly has no idea about any of it and I love that for her, FitzSkimmons endgame, but all the individual relationships within the trio get a lot of focus too, this gets like. STUPIDLY sappy in the latter half, polyamory could've saved Fitz and Daisy's relationship and I'll die on that hill, oh yeah, Polyamory, Inhumans have alien features and it's referenced a couple of times, AKA I'm using this to spread my Kree (and there4 Inhumans as well) are canines not primates agenda

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how lucky are we? (to have so much to lose)

by puppyboy_butch

Summary

It's in the aftermath, when they're still sifting through the rubble, when their muscles are still weak, when everything is finally calm for once, that the first domino topples.

Or perhaps it fell a long time ago. The first time they met her. All the times she risked herself to ensure their safety, their happiness. Maybe the dominoes have been falling for far longer than any of them know.

Either way, as they stand in the rubble of their once home, Jemma pushes past all the quiet conversations going on around her and focuses in on Daisy, coming to a stop next to her.

"Come stay with me and Fitz," she says, without even remotely thinking it through first.

OR

In which nobody gets kidnapped to the future after the Framework, and these three finally get a chance to rest.

Notes

Don't ask what's going on on the SHIELD side of things. I could not tell you.

I (like everyone and their mother) have aged these three down very slightly. Daisy is 24, and FitzSimmons are like 26-27.

This is kind of all over the place. I wrote like 12,000 words of it in a sleep deprived manic state. So. I sincerely hope it's as good as I think it is and not just vaguely nonsensical rambling LMAO

It's also technically a sequel. You don't necessarily have to read the first one to understand this, but there are a couple of references that won't make sense if you don't.

Title is from Ankles by Lucy Dacus :)

Trigger warnings include:
-Very frank discussions of past sexual assault and child abuse, even more so than the first part
-Suicidal ideation and past self harm
-Weird trauma responses to being brainwashed
-Dissociation
-Technically cheating? But like. Not really. It makes sense in context okay

See the end of the work for more notes

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Either way, as they all stand in the rubble of their once home, Jemma pushes past all the quiet conversations going on around her and focuses in on Daisy, coming to a stop next to her. Together they stare at the new scorch mark on the floor, the only sign of Robbie's departure.

"I don't have anywhere to go," Daisy says abruptly.

Jemma turns to her. "Sorry?"

"I don't have anywhere to *go,* Simmons," she repeats, frowning. "You guys kind of kidnapped me out of my van. *Again.* Pretty sure it's been scrapped, just like the first one probably was. *This*–" she says, gesturing tiredly to the destroyed base around them. "–was kinda all I had." She kicks at a stray piece of rubble.

"Why not ask Mack if you can stay with him?" Jemma suggests. "I'm sure he'd love to have you."

Daisy winces and shakes her head. "No. No, he's– something happened– in– in *there.* I don't know what, but something happened. He'll need time, I think."

She sighs and drops her head into her hands, pressing the heels of her palms into her eyes. "I'll be fine. It's– I'll work something out. Get a hotel, or use some SHIELD safe houses or something."

"Come stay with me and Fitz," Jemma says, without even remotely thinking it through first.

Daisy's head jolts up and she stares at her with wide eyes. "Sorry, did you not hear the part where I'm giving *Mack* space because of what happened to him in the Framework?"

"I heard you. I still say you should stay with me and Fitz."

Daisy straightens up to her full height and folds her arms protectively

across her chest. "Uh– I don't know if that's the best idea. Fitz and I–" She cuts herself off and swallows uncomfortably.

Jemma waits for her to continue. She doesn't.

"Fitz wouldn't mind. And you helped us get our apartment in the first place. Letting you stay while you get back on your feet would be the least we could do."

"I don't know. I just–"

Jemma cuts her off by reaching out and laying a hand on her bicep. "Daisy, please?"

And listen– does Jemma know Daisy has a hard time saying no to her? Yes. Does that make this an underhanded tactic? Also yes. She just wants her friend to be okay. Is that so bad?

Daisy stares down at her, searching her eyes for– something. What, she doesn't know. Eventually, she deflates. "Okay. Yeah, okay. I'll stay with you guys. But just for a little bit, okay? A couple of days at the most."

One month after everything happened, SHIELD gets fully back up and running, halfway to being fully re-legitimized. Jemma entirely expects Daisy to move out and back onto the in-repairs Playground the second there's a bunk available. She knows Fitz does too.

She doesn't.

“You’re sure you guys don’t mind me staying for a few more days?” Daisy asks them one night, as they’re all getting ready for bed.

“Daisy,” Jemma says. “You can stay as long as you want. Fitz and I love having you.”

Fitz and Daisy avoid looking at each in the mirror. She only notices this in retrospect.

Two months after everything happened, Fitz tries to initiate sex with her.

It goes well at first. Great, even. *She's* certainly enjoying herself, and she's sure Fitz is enjoying it as well, the both of them having already shed several layers. She's *very* ready to take this further. It's been far too long.

“Did you lock the door?” She asks, grinning against his lips.

“Of course I did,” he assures her, starting to leave kisses along her jawline. “I love you.”

She giggles, an almost embarrassingly girlish sound that only he can bring out of her. “I love you too.”

“I love you *more*–” he says. “*–Ophelia.*”

It takes both of them a second to properly register what he just said, what name he just used. The moment it clicks, he wrenches himself off of her and staggers away from the bed.

"*Fitz*–" Jemma says, immediately jumping up after him, mood effectively dead in the water. "Fitz, it's okay, it's okay. Just–"

"*Stay away from me!*" He shouts, his eyes wild.

"Okay, okay." She freezes and throws her hands up in front of her placatingly. "I'm staying right here. Everything's okay."

"*No no no no*–" he chants, turning away from her and bringing his hands up to his head, alternating between tugging harshly on his curls and beating his fists against his skull.

They both jump and whirl around when the door bursts inward, followed shortly by Daisy toppling in shoulder first. "Are you guys okay?" She asks frantically, once she's righted herself. "I heard yelling."

"We're alright," Jemma tries to reassure her. She thinks it'd be a lot more effective if Fitz didn't pick that exact moment to try and put his fist through the wall.

“Woah, hey!” Daisy exclaims. “What the hell is going on?!”

“He– he called me the wrong name,” Jemma admits, somewhat

shamefully. Fitz lets out an anguished keen and collapses onto the ground.

“Oh,” Daisy says, seemingly only just now taking in their states of relative undress, and the fact that she had to bust the door open. “Oh!” She repeats, a grin forming, before it abruptly slides right off her face. Jemma can see the moment it clicks in her head. “*Oh.*”

The room goes quiet.

“Simmons, why don't you go get him something to drink?”

“I can't just–”

“*Jemma,*” Daisy cuts her protest off. “Please.”

Jemma nods and leaves the room without saying anything further, only sparing Fitz's huddled form one last glance. The last thing she sees before she rounds the corner is Daisy crouching down across from him, mirroring his pose.

She takes a second to collect herself in the kitchen, runs her hands under the cold water of the sink and presses them to her face when they're sufficiently chilled.

How do you deal with your partner calling you by someone else's name in bed? She's sure she can find a plethora of answers from a multitude of different sources, but not a single one that's actually applicable to their situation.

Jemma sighs and grabs a glass from the cupboard, filling it up with ice from the ice maker in the fridge and running it under the tap, then making her way back to the bedroom. She pauses right outside the door, making sure she stays out of sight.

Daisy is saying something to Fitz, very quietly. She can hear her talking, just not what she's actually saying. Jemma inches ever so closer to try and make it out.

“–lveus,” she hears. “He liked when I used his– it doesn't matter. But he had Ward's memories.”

She's talking about *Hive,* Jemma realizes with a jolt. She's never talked about him before, in fact she specifically goes out of her way to avoid even the *possibility* of the subject. So why now? Why in this specific situation?

…she doesn't think she wants to know.

"–t's nothing new," Daisy says, before continuing very, very softly. Jemma strains her ears. "–knew what Ward did to me. He made me– he made me like it. So I *get it,* Fitz. I really do. And I'm sorry, but it'll probably happen again."

Jemma steps back from the doorway, free hand over her mouth. She has to take a minute, several deep breaths, even a sip of what's supposed to be Fitz's cold water, before she's able to step forward again and knock on the doorframe.

"Is it okay if I enter?" She asks softly. Someone sniffles harshly. Fitz, she thinks.

"Yeah, come on in," Daisy calls after a moment of silence.

Jemma walks into the bedroom, her eyes immediately zeroing in on Fitz. He's still on the ground, but he's sitting up properly now, his knees pulled up to his chest. His face is half hidden behind the tops of them, and his eyes are red and puffy.

He's put a shirt on, she realizes. Backwards. She feels her heart break all over again.

She joins them on the floor and hands the glass to Fitz, who takes it with a quiet murmur of thanks. Jemma sits there and flounders.

"Fitz–" she hesitates. "Are you– are you alright?"

He raises his head up, but avoids eye contact all the same. "Shouldn't I be asking *you* that?" He croaks.

"What?" She asks, taken aback. "Why would you be asking *me?*"

"I called you another woman's *name,* Jemma!" He exclaims, starting to tug at his hair again. Daisy immediately reaches out and grabs the offending hand. Jemma is eternally grateful to her for it. "I reminded you of an awful event in our relationship, of me being *unfaithful*–!"

"Fitz–" Jemma says, her stomach dropping. "You don't– do you think what happened to you was you being *unfaithful?*" Fitz blinks at her.

"What else would it be?" He asks, voice weak. "I– I liked it. I *wanted* it."

"Because she ***made*** you, Leo!" Jemma cries, lunging forward and

gripping his shaking hands in between her own. “*She made you want it!* That’s not being *unfaithful,* Fitz! That’s rape!”

Fitz’s face grows pale and he jerks backwards, knocking over the glass of water and spilling it on the hardwood floor. “I don't–”

“She changed your *brain,* Fitz. You're not at fault for this,” she whispers. “You have to believe me. *It’s not your fault.*”

Daisy bolts upright and rushes out of the room. Fitz just shakes his head, tears sliding down his face.

“I wish I could believe you.”

Three months after everything happened, Jemma wakes up to the sound of quiet crying, the bed cold and empty next to her, where Fitz usually lies. She slips out from under the sheets and quietly pads out into the hallway, stopping by the corner of the wall.

Fitz is curled up on the couch, nearly folded in half with how far he's leaning forward. Daisy is sitting to his right, her hand on his back.

"It gets better, right?" She hears him plead. "It has to get better, Daisy. Please tell me it gets better."

"...it gets easier," is all Daisy says in reply. “But it doesn't go away. I'm sorry.”

Jemma watches as Fitz's face crumples. “I'm ***sorry,*** *Daisy!*” He weeps. “*I'm so* ***sorry!***”

He collapses inward, sobbing into his knees, and Daisy leans forward as well, fully taking him into her arms. “*How?*” He cries, sounding more disgusted and hateful than she's ever heard him, except for in–*there.* “*How can you even stand to* ***touch*** *me after what I did to you?*”

Jemma watches for several minutes as they sit there doing nothing but holding each other, completely silent save for Fitz's choked sobbing. She's recited the periodic table in her head nine times, and is about to finish her tenth recitation, when she notices his crying starting to calm down.

“I thought the same thing about *you,* y’know,” Daisy eventually admits quietly. Jemma almost doesn't hear her. “When you found me in that storage closet.”

Fitz's breath hitches, and he slowly raises his head from his knees.

“I don't blame you, Fitz. Maybe I should, but I don't,” Daisy sighs. “I think I *understand* too much to be angry anymore.”

“I'm sorry,” Fitz sniffs. “I love you.”

Jemma takes the opportunity to announce herself. "Hey," she says quietly, knocking softly on the wall and going out to join them. Fitz quickly sits up and starts scrubbing at his eyes, but Daisy just nods at her in greeting. She doesn't look particularly surprised to see her. "What's going on?"

“Nothing much,” Daisy says, while Fitz grabs a tissue and blows his nose. “We're just– hanging out.”

“Hanging out.” Jemma checks the clock. “At 3:47 AM?”

“Yup,” Daisy confirms. Fitz laughs wetly.

She narrows her eyes at them. “What were you talking about?”

“Nothing,” Fitz says.

“Stuff,” Daisy says at the exact same time.

Okay.

She knows they have their issues, both with themselves and with each other. Obviously they do, and obviously there's things she doesn't know about, *whatever* is going on here being one of them, but–

Really? *Really?* Do they think she's stupid?

She's been trying to get them to go to therapy, but SHIELD is still (likely temporarily, based on its track record) being labeled a terrorist organization, and the only therapist who would have been both cleared on everything *and* qualified to deal with their issues died last year.

That's– one of the issues, actually.

Maybe they can try a regular, non SHIELD therapist? And just–

obfuscate the truth slightly. Talk about controlling, abusive exes who forced them to do things they didn't want to do. That's close enough, right?

(Just for a second, Jemma imagines what she'd say about herself.

I got sick. I thought I knew someone. I almost drowned. I had to work a job I didn't enjoy. I got stranded in a foreign country. I was there for a while. I made a friend.

It's purely a hypothetical, of course. She doesn't need therapy, not like Fitz and Daisy do.)

Jemma reaches up and pinches the bridge of her nose. “It's too early for this,” she sighs. “I love the both of you dearly. *Please,* for the love of *God,* can you both go to therapy?”

“No,” they say in unison.

Jesus *Christ.* Jemma turns around and goes back to bed.

Four months after everything happened, Jemma comes home to an empty apartment. She tries not to panic, really, she does, but she sees the way Fitz eyes the cooking knives sometimes, the way Daisy has only worn long sleeves since she came back.

She changed the passcode on her gun safe, without telling either of them. It doesn't particularly *mean* anything when they both have their own– multiple, actually, in Daisy's case– but it certainly makes her *feel* better, knowing there's one less method for them to potentially use to hurt themselves.

"Fitz?" She calls out. "Daisy? Are either of you here?"

There's no response.

Okay. She's officially panicking now.

Jemma kicks off her flats and drops her purse and jacket on the table, instead of taking the time to properly put them away and hang them up like she always does. She stalks further into the apartment with duelling feelings of determination and trepidation. She hopes she finds

them. She hopes she doesn't find them.

It's not until she reaches the bedroom that she finally hears signs of life, in the form of the quiet rise and fall of their voices coming from behind the closed bathroom door.

Jemma approaches the door and knocks on it with her knuckles. The voices stop. “Fitz? Daisy?” She calls. “I'm coming in, okay?”

She's hit with the overwhelming stench of bleach, hair dye, and– oh, Jesus *Christ– weed* as soon as she opens the door. Of course she gets all *worried* about them, just for it to end up being *this.*

"*Jesus,*" she coughs, reeling back and squeezing her eyes shut. "Did you even open the window? Don't answer that, it was rhetorical."

She pushes past the blurry forms of Fitz and Daisy and wrenches the bathroom window open. "Next time you do this, *please* open the window first. And for God's sake one of you turn the fan on!"

The bathroom fan makes a rather grating clicking noise as it whirs to life. She needs to get Fitz to look at that. As soon as he's not high out of his mind.

"What were you two thinking? Do you have any idea how toxic hair dye fumes can be when inhaled?" Jemma pinches the bridge of her nose. "Are you trying to kill us all via suffocation?"

"...not *you,*" Fitz says after a pause. Daisy bursts into laughter.

Lord help her. Jemma huffs in frustration and starts unbuttoning her work shirt.

Fitz stands up from his stool. "Erm– what are you–?"

"Yeah, I think I'm just gonna–" Daisy mutters as she attempts to sidle out the door, face flushed purple. Jemma grabs her by the elbow.

"You–" she says, pointing at Fitz. "Sit back down. And *you*–" She rounds on Daisy. "*Stay.*"

Fitz sits back down. Daisy stays.

"And I'm taking my shirt off so it doesn't get covered in bloody– *hair dye.*" With that, she finally wrests her shirt off, before roughly balling it up and throwing it out onto the bed.

When she looks back at them, Daisy has her arms folded across her chest and her face pointed towards the ceiling. Fitz isn't even pretending not to stare at her.

"Oh, *grow up,* the both of you!" Jemma scolds. "I still have a vest on!"

Daisy coughs into her fist, though her cough sounds suspiciously like the word *tight.*

Jemma narrows her eyes. “Daisy, do you have anything to add?”

Daisy immediately straightens up and shakes her head. “Uh– no, ma’am.” Fitz snickers.

Jesus. She feels like she might already be getting a contact high.

Daisy’s hair had already been bleached and dyed, it looks like, with the tips of it a deep purple. It just needs to be rinsed.

“How long has that been sitting?” Jemma asks.

Daisy looks at her blankly. “Uh–”

“You didn’t set a timer?”

“No– it’s– fifteen minutes?” She guesses, glancing over at Fitz, who shrugs. “Fifteen to twenty.”

“Okay. Daisy, go sit on the edge of the tub while I help Fitz.” Jemma hands her her phone out of her pocket. “*And set a bloody timer!*”

“Aye aye, captain,” Daisy says, doing what she's told.

With that, Jemma turns to Fitz. His hair has been bleached already, but there's an opened box of hair dye on the counter next to him. When she picks it up, she sees it's the ugliest shade of neon orange she's ever had the misfortune of encountering.

“*Really?*” She asks him. “You really want *this?*”

He nods. “Yeah. It's–” He shrugs his shoulders. “It's ugly. And *I* picked it. She would've *hated* it.”

…oh.

Jemma softens. “Is *that* what this is about?”

“Yeah,” Fitz confirms quietly. “It was all a bit spontaneous.”

She looks over at Daisy, but she shakes her head.

“Not for me. I did my angsty backstory dye job already, a while ago. I'm just moral support for whatever impulsive and reckless behavior may happen.”

Okay. Jemma turns back to Fitz and tilts his head back, pressing a kiss to his forehead.

She pulls the tube of hair dye out of the box and, after a moment of slight trepidation, unscrews the cap and squeezes some out onto her palm, rubbing her hands together to maximize the surface area. “Are you ready?”

Fitz blinks up at her. “Did you mean to do that?”

“What?” He points at the counter, where there's a box of nitrile exam gloves, the black ones she uses for work.

Jemma looks down at her hair dye covered hands. Her *very much ungloved* hair dye covered hands.

…goddamnit.

Five months after ev– after *the Framework,* Fitz finally gives in and agrees to start attending therapy.

She doesn't know what the breaking point is, exactly. She likes to think her constant nagging has something to do with it, but–

Either way, Fitz is tired, he's stressed, and he's barely slept in days because of nightmares when he turns to her in the lab and asks:

“Do you really think I should try therapy?”

Jemma nearly drops her beaker in shock.

(Which would/could be disastrous and bad and very *expensive,* Jemma. And therefore you should probably not be wondering if this very volatile heretofore undiscovered chemical would react with

things– e.g. a certain lab floor– in a cool *way,* Jemma.)

“Sorry? What did you just say?”

“Do you really think I should try therapy?” He repeats.

“Um–” She blinks and shakes her head slightly, giving as much of her attention as she can to him. “Are you actually asking? As in, do you want my honest opinion right now?”

He nods, his eyes not wavering from her face.

“Yes,” she says without any hesitation. “I love you, Fitz, and I do think you're perfect the way you are. That being said, I also think you could benefit from therapy more than possibly anyone I've ever met, save for maybe Daisy. Actually, the two of you are tied.”

“*That’s* your honest opinion?” He asks.

Jemma winces. Maybe she should’ve pulled the punch a *little* bit. “Erm– yes. To be fair, I *have* been saying you should try it for a while now. Since the academy, if I’m remembering correctly.”

She is.

Fitz nods. “Alright,” he says.

Jemma blinks. “Alright?”

“Alright.”

She wonders if it’ll be this easy to get Daisy to go as well.

Six months after the Framework, Jemma has a nightmare.

It's *about* the Framework, actually. Or rather, the immediate lead up to it. So when she startles awake, heart racing, and sees Fitz's face looming over her, her first instinct is *not* to dive into his arms and gladly accept his comfort, like it would normally be.

Her first instinct is– in a rather unfortunately hard earned knee jerk reaction that she doesn't think will ever fully go away– to reach under

her pillow, pull out her shiv, and hold it up to his throat.

The LMD freezes above her.

“Get the fuck away from me,” she says.

“Jemma–” the LMD begins, then cuts itself off when she presses the blade further against its throat.

“*Get the fuck away from me,*” she repeats.

“Okay, okay. I'm backing up.” It holds its hands up away from her and backs off, scooting towards the foot of the bed. “See? I'm backing up. I'm–”

Jemma springs forward once she has enough room to and pounces on top of the LMD, wrestling it beneath her. Once she gets it good and pinned underneath her body, she presses her shiv against its throat once again.

“I'll only say this one time,” she growls. “*Where the fuck is Fitz?*”

The LMDs eyes widen, it's Adam's apple bobbing as it swallows. The movement is enough to create a tiny cut in its synthetic skin, fake blood immediately welling to the surface. She has to give it to Fitz– *her* Fitz, the *real* Fitz, not this ***thing*** underneath her– he created a damn convincing android. She's almost proud of him, in a strange way.

“Jemma,” the LMD tries again. “It's me, it's Fitz. You–” it pauses when her blade presses minutely further into its neck. “–you had a nightmare,” it continues. “It's okay. Everything is okay.”

Jemma doesn't move an inch. She's not falling for any tricks, not again.

“I'm bleeding, see?” It points towards the cut on its neck with its eyes. “I'm bleeding.”

“That doesn't mean *anything,*” she snarls, tightening her grip on the handle. She's getting ready to make the finishing blow, when–

“Daisy?!” The LMD yells from underneath her, still staring up into her eyes. “Can you come here?! As quickly as possible, please!”

Jemma pauses. What–?

There's a knock at the bedroom door. Her eyes snap to it for a second, before quickly darting back to the LMD below her.

"*Please* come in!" It calls out. The door opens, and Daisy– something that looks like her?– steps into the room.

"Is there a *reason* you're yelling at– what the *fuck.*"

"Oh, thank *God,*" the one underneath her says. "Jemma had a nightmare. She thinks I'm an LMD. Please tell me you know some way to get her to put the fucking knife down!"

The one that looks like Daisy stands in the doorway for a second, eyes wide, before springing into action. "Yeah, I've got this. Just try not to move or anything, okay?"

"Kinda hard when she's got a bloody ***knife*** *to my neck!*" The one that looks like Fitz yells. Jemma readjusts her grip and presses down, drawing more blood.

"Shut up! Both of you!" She shouts. Both of them freeze. "Where are they?! What have you done to them?!"

"Jemma," the Daisy one says in a low tone, crouching down and pressing its palm flat against the floor. "Put your free hand on the bed." Jemma's eyes dart up to meet its– hers? "No tricks. I swear. You can even keep the shiv."

Very hesitantly, Jemma reaches her left hand down and touches it to the mattress. Instantly, she can feel familiar vibrations buzz at it, and she nearly collapses from relief.

"*Daisy,*" she gasps, tears burning at the backs of her eyes. "*It's not Fitz.* It's *not!* I don't know *how* or *when* but they *replaced him!*"

Daisy (! It's *Daisy, really* Daisy) slowly stands up. "The guy pinned underneath you?" Jemma nods. "Looks like Fitz to me. Do you want me to double check?"

Jemma nods again as she finally, *finally* starts to cry. Daisy approaches the bed and, once she's close enough, lays a hand on the side of Fitz's face, the only spot she can easily access.

"Sorry in advance," she whispers down to him, just loud enough for Jemma to hear. "This is probably gonna feel *really* weird."

With that she sends light vibrations rattling through his skull. The close proximity means it's felt by all three of them, which means Jemma can feel the vibrations bouncing off of his bones just like Daisy can, though (she imagines) to a much, much lesser extent.

Jemma promptly bursts into sobs.

“Oh, *Fitz!*” She weeps, throwing herself fully down on top of him, with Daisy only just managing to snatch her shiv away at the last second. “*I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!*”

“S’okay,” he soothes. His arms, now free from the improvised restraints known as her knees, immediately come up to wrap around her shoulders. She buries her face into the side of his neck, only to cry harder when she feels his warm blood trickle onto the bridge of her nose. “Jemma, it's *okay.* You didn't mean it, and it's only skin deep.”

“*I'm sorry,*” Jemma repeats, feeling like it's the only thing she knows how to say. She hears Daisy sigh.

“You guys gonna be okay?” She asks.

“Yeah, I got her from here,” Fitz assures. “Why don't you go back to bed?”

She feels Daisy give her a kiss on the back of her head as she leaves, and hears the door shut behind her. Fitz tightens his arms around her.

Jemma opens her eyes and turns her head, staring at the cut she made on Fitz's neck. She brings her hand up and lightly touches it with the tips of her fingers, just to check if it's still bleeding.

“It's already clotting, Jemma, see?” Fitz murmurs into her hair. “It's okay.”

She sniffs and shakes her head. “I could've killed you. I almost *did.*”

“But you didn't. You stopped before you did any real damage.”

“But I *could've*–”

“*Jemma,*” Fitz cuts her off. “It took me a long time to realize this, but you can't– you *can't* feel guilty about what you *almost* did, or only *thought about* doing. What matters is what you *do.* And what you did was *stop,* okay?”

“Okay.” She sniffs again and nods against his chest, pressing her ear

up against his heartbeat. “Okay.”

“Maybe you should practice what you preach and try your own hand at therapy,” he recommends. Jemma laughs wetly.

“Don't be ridiculous, Leo. I give so much advice so I don't have to take it.”

Seven months after the Framework, two after she's finally convinced Fitz to start attending therapy with one of the new SHIELD therapists, he comes home from a session and quietly settles on the couch.

Daisy greets him from her spot at the table, not looking up from her computer. Jemma goes over to give him a kiss, before continuing working on dinner.

After several minutes of silence, he speaks up. "I'm going to tell you both something, and I need you to– to please just listen, okay?"

Jemma puts down the soup ladle. Daisy closes her laptop. Fitz stares down at the ground and bounces his knee up and down.

"I– I hear him sometimes," he says quietly, avoiding eye contact with either of them. "His voice, in my head." He pauses. "On the– on the really bad days, I see him."

"Who?" Jemma questions.

"*The doctor,*" Fitz whispers, eyes wide. She sees Daisy go rigid out of the corner of her eye. "I– Dr. Montgomery said I should tell you."

Jemma turns the burner off and goes and joins him on the couch. "How long has this been going on?" She asks, taking his shaking hand.

"I've been seeing him since the Framework," he admits. "But the hallucinations aren't– aren't *new.* They're from the hypoxia. I saw you, for a while. When you were gone. Still do, sometimes."

Jemma feels her heart break. "Oh, *Fitz.* Why didn't you say anything?"

"I didn't want to seem *weak,* I think. I was already struggling so much

with my voice, and my hands. I just–" He shrugs. "But we've been talking about all of it lately. And– um– today we discussed medication? For the hallucinations. I'm going to be starting that soon."

"Will you tell me from now on?" Jemma prompts. "When you're hearing or seeing him?"

Fitz smiles at her softly. "I'll try."

Daisy clears her throat. "Sorry to interrupt, but isn't that– uh– isn't that normal?"

They both turn to look at her.

"Are you seriously asking if *hallucinations* are normal?" Jemma asks incredulously.

"*No*– that's not– okay, obviously hallucinations aren't *normal,* but like–" she pauses for a moment, gathering her thoughts. "That's just– that's just part of it."

"Part of what?"

"Brainwashing."

Fitz rears back like he's been punched. "That's not–" He doesn't continue.

"Daisy," Jemma begins slowly, when it becomes clear Fitz is no longer talking. "Have you been having hallucinations since being cured?"

Daisy frowns. "Only on the bad days," she says, like that makes it any better. Jemma kindly does not point out that a good portion of Daisy's days seem to be bad days.

"What do you see?" She asks.

She watches as Daisy's eyes flick off to the side. Jemma subtly glances over in the direction she's looking, but there's nothing there.

"Nothing important," Daisy says eventually, voice tight. She's still staring at empty air.

"...are you seeing something now?"

"*No.*" Her eyes are back on Jemma now, not wavering at all.

"Daisy–"

“What does it matter?” She interrupts. “If I do see things? They're not real– believe me, *I know that.* And they've never once impacted my performance on missions, or my work.”

She stands up and starts to tap her fingers against her legs. “That's not rhetorical, I'm actually asking.” She frowns. “Why does it matter? I can deal with it fine by myself.”

“But you shouldn't *have* to, Daisy,” Jemma says. Fitz nods next to her.

Daisy stares at them with wide eyes, her shoulders tense. "I'm going out," she eventually says, stalking to the door and pulling her shoes on. She grabs her leather jacket from the coat rack, the one with the pack of cigarettes none of them will claim ownership of in the inner pocket.

She slams the door behind her.

—

Daisy comes home two hours later smelling like cigarette smoke and cheap alcohol, with bruises on her face and blood on her knuckles.

"Where's Fitz?" She asks when Jemma forces her down onto the couch, medical bag in hand, and crouches down on the ground by her feet.

"Out looking for *you.* We agreed one of us should stay here in case you came back."

"*In case* I came back?" She cracks a smile, showing off her bloody teeth. "You're making it sound like I would just run away completely."

"Oh, of *course,*" Jemma scoffs, pulling out disinfectant, petroleum jelly, and a roll of gauze. "It's not as though that's something you've done multiple times in the past."

Daisy flinches and starts trying to pull away, but Jemma tightens her grip on her hand in response, as firmly as she dares. "*No,* you don't get to try and leave again. Stay *still.*"

She freezes in place, then settles uncomfortably against the back of the couch, her shoulders up by her ears. "That's not fair," she says quietly. "I had t–"

"Oh, you *had* to?"

"Will you let me finish?" Daisy scowls, then winces at the sting of disinfectant on her split knuckles. "*Yes,* I *had* to. I *had* to leave after H–*after,* just like I had to leave after I went through Terrigenesis."

"But you *didn't,* Daisy," Jemma pleads, desperately trying to catch her eyes. “We could've *helped* you."

"People kept *dying,* Jemma!" She yells suddenly. Jemma lets go of her in surprise, so Daisy stands up and stumbles away from the couch, running her less injured hand through her hair harshly. "Because of me! Trip, Lincoln, my parents, hell, even *Raina!*” She laughs. “Not to mention the villagers and SHIELD agents in Hunan, or those agents and scientists who might as well be dead! *They're all dead* ***because of me!***"

Jemma watches as Daisy instantly deflates as she turns to face her again, her shoulders dropping. "I just–" she starts, her voice small. "I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I killed you next. *Any* of you. I had to leave, Jemma. I had to."

She lets out a sigh and drops her face into her hands. "That's what I see, okay? All the people who are dead because of me."

“...will you come sit back down?” Jemma asks softly, watching her from the floor. Daisy lifts her head up and stares at her tiredly, but nods. She slowly makes her way back over to the couch, seemingly exhausted by every small move.

She pauses right before she sits back down, her head cocked to the side. “Fitz is back,” she says, then collapses onto the cushions in front of her.

True to Daisy's word, Jemma hears the distinctive sound of a key scraping in the doorknob mere seconds later. It opens after a moment, and Fitz stumbles through the doorway.

“Hey,” he greets, raising his phone. “Got your text.”

Jemma holds up one finger at him, then reaches up and cradles Daisy's face between her hands, lightly stroking her thumbs over her skin when she leans into it. "Be good for me and stay put while I go talk to Fitz, okay?"

She feels Daisy shiver with her entire body as she nods. "Yeah, okay."

She stands up and gives her a kiss on the forehead, before leaving her

to go and join Fitz by the table.

"Hi," she greets him with a kiss.

"Hello," he responds, wrapping his arms around her. "I stopped by a bar near here. Apparently about an hour ago some woman came in, had a few drinks, and picked a fight with some of the other patrons."

"Massive coincidence, that," Jemma sighs. "I talked to her. Or tried to, at least. You wanna have a go?"

Fitz heaves a sigh and nods, but doesn't make any moves to let go of her, just holds her tighter and sways back and forth slightly.

“I love you,” he says. She hums and pulls away, grabbing his hand and leading him over to the couch, and to their wayward alien.

“Are you drunk?” Is the first thing he says to her, his eyebrows raised. She shakes her head.

“I didn't drink enough for that.”

“But you drank enough to get in a bar fight.”

Daisy rolls her eyes. “They were Watchdogs. I didn't just beat up some random people for no reason.”

“So you *didn't* go out with the express purpose of picking a fight?”

She doesn't bother replying to that. They all know it'd be a lie.

"Thank you for doing what I asked," Jemma says softly. “Staying put, I mean.” Daisy nods and emits a quiet rumbling sound. "Are you going to let me treat your knuckles now?"

A pair of bruised and bloody hands are held out to her in response. Jemma collects them in her own, kneeling down in front of Daisy's seated form and continuing her work. It's quiet, punctuated by the occasional sound of Daisy wincing, or Jemma soothing her.

“I don't even care if you leave anymore, Daisy,” Fitz says suddenly, breaking the silence. "I just want you to promise to come *back*."

Jemma says nothing about the tears that drip down onto the gauze she's wrapping around the torn skin in front of her.

—

She's awake before Fitz the next morning, just like she usually is. Normally she'd enjoy laying there with him wrapped up in her arms until one of them absolutely has to get up, but today she slips out from behind him, placating him with a kiss on the cheek when he stirs.

She's getting up early this morning. She just– she just needs to be sure.

She pauses at the bedroom door, hesitantly cracking it open. She breathes out a sigh of relief when she hears Daisy's voice quietly filtering throughout the apartment. She's catching her on the tail end of a phone call, she thinks.

"–'ll be in later today," Jemma hears her say. "I just–"

She pauses.

"Uh huh. Yes, ma'am."

There's more silence. Jemma starts making her way down the hall.

"Thank you for being so underst– oh. Uh–"

She can see Daisy now. She's standing in the middle of the living room, still in her boxers and sleep shirt. She lightly kicks at the shag carpet while she's listening to whoever's on the other end speak, then looks up and makes eye contact with Jemma. She raises a hand in greeting and smiles semi awkwardly at her.

(…once. Just *once,* Jemma would like to be able to get the jump on Daisy. She'll get her one day, she swears.)

"Yes, ma'am. I understand," Daisy says into the phone. "Yeah, tell him I said 'hi' back. I'll see you later, May. Bye."

She throws her phone onto the couch and nods at Jemma. "Morning."

"Good morning, Daisy," Jemma greets. "Can I check your hands?"

Daisy sits down on the couch and offers Jemma her hands. Jemma sits next to her this time, rather than crouching, and starts to unwind the gauze.

She's finished with one hand and is in the process of checking the other when Daisy speaks up. "I have a therapy session in three days."

Jemma pauses. "Does this have anything to do with what happened

last night?" Daisy frowns and shakes her head.

"Kind of? Not really. I started wondering if anyone else on the team goes, so I talked to Mack about it. He said that he does, that therapy is really helpful for him, and that he thinks I in particular would really benefit from it."

"So *that's* what finally gets you to give in? Not Fitz and I recommending it for months, but one conversation with Mack?" Jemma asks, slightly testy. Daisy winces.

"Er– *no.* I hung up on him. But it made me curious, and everyone else I asked said pretty much the same exact thing. May actually just threatened to temporarily bench me if I didn't go to at least one session."

Jemma sighs, half frustrated and half woefully endeared. Of *course* the only thing that would actually motivate Daisy to go to therapy would be the threat of inactivity.

"I love you, you know that?" She tells her as she finishes putting fresh bandages on her split knuckles. Daisy just swallows and looks away, nodding in return.

Eight months after the Framework, Daisy comes home from therapy, sits down at the table, and says:

"I need a dog."

Jemma doesn't look up from her paperwork. "If you get a dog then we'd finally have to let Fitz get his monkey. Besides, the complex doesn't allow pets."

Daisy shakes her head. "That's not what I meant. My therapist says I should look into getting a service dog."

Well!

"Elaborate," Jemma says, shutting the file and throwing onto the stack next to her.

She shrugs and slides down in her chair. "There's not much to say. She

said it could be really helpful for all my issues."

"Physical or mental?"

"Both, I think. Can it be both?"

"I believe so," Jemma says. "What, exactly, did your therapist *say* you should get a service dog for?"

Daisy pauses and stares at her, then moves her gaze to the wall behind her, her fingers starting to tap at the table. "She said that she thinks I have severe post traumatic stress disorder," she grits out. "And that I really shouldn't be in this line of work anymore, and probably shouldn't have even joined in the first place, but that that's clearly not an option for me specifically at this point in time."

Jemma blinks. "That's–" Honestly, that's way more information than she was expecting to hear. "Do you agree with her assessment?"

"No," Daisy says without hesitation. Jemma sighs. *There* it is. "But I agreed to try therapy for two months, remember?"

"Are you finding it helpful, at least?" Jemma asks. "Even if you don't necessarily agree with the conclusions she comes to, has talking with her about everything you've been through been helpful at all?"

Daisy glares down at the table. "...I don't," she says eventually. "She has a file."

—

"Daisy might be getting a dog," she tells Fitz when he gets home, as soon as he walks through the door.

"Then I get my monkey," he responds without hesitating.

Jemma rolls her eyes affectionately. "A *service* dog, Fitz."

"Oh." There's a beat. "Then I'll get a service monkey."

She watches him as he sheds his jacket and kneels down to untie his shoes, thinking. "Would that be something *you're* interested in?" He opens his mouth to reply. "A PTSD service dog, Fitz, not a monkey."

He closes his mouth and stands up, toeing off his shoes. "I honestly don't know," he says. "I think it could be helpful, but I'm not–" He pauses. "I think I'm at just the right combination of therapy and

medication. I don't know if I need one as I am right now."

"You'd tell me, though?" Jemma asks. "If that changes?"

"Of course, Jemma. It's not as if we can't reopen this topic of discussion. Besides," he adds, approaching her at the table and greeting her with a kiss. "I could just steal Daisy's."

"I love you. Please don't steal people's service dogs."

"*Borrow it,* then."

Nine months after the Framework, Daisy comes home from work and, in a parallel to what happened with Fitz just two months prior, flops down on the couch and announces:

"I have to tell you guys something."

Fitz and Jemma look up from their books. "Do you want us to join you over there or should we stay at the table?" He asks. Daisy doesn't respond, just keeps looking up at the ceiling. "Daisy?"

She jolts. "Hm? Oh, whatever you guys want is great."

They exchange a look. It's always a warning sign when she immediately acquiesces to what they want. Or rather, what she *thinks* they want. That, combined with the fact that her new service dog, an American Golden Retriever named (rather inexplicably) Spork is nosing at her lap, is making Jemma very concerned right now.

"What do *you* want?" She asks cautiously. Daisy stares through her with wide eyes. "*Daisy.* What do you want?"

Daisy swallows and shakes her head, her hands absentmindedly moving to her lap and petting Spork on the neck. "Can you choose?"

"Choose what?"

"What I want."

Okay, well *that's* new. Normally when she gets like this she isolates completely until it passes. Asking them to– to *make her choices for her*

is–

It's *new,* is all.

"Um– we'll join you on the couch, then," Fitz hedges, giving Jemma a look of confusion. She gives him a bewildered look of her own as she bookmarks her page and stands up.

"I don't know," she whispers. "Just go with it."

Daisy looks a bit like a cornered animal as they approach her, her eyes wide and distant and her fingers tapping rapidly against her dog's head. Spork huffs at her agitation and climbs up onto the couch with her, eventually settling herself halfway onto Daisy's lap.

"Well, there's our seats taken," Fitz mutters to Jemma.

"Speak for yourself," she replies, poking Spork on the hip. "Spork, scoot over."

Spork does not scoot over. Just gives her a *look* out of the corner of her eyes.

Jemma frowns. "Daisy, move your dog."

Daisy, eyes still far away, immediately gathers her dog up in her arms and pulls her completely onto her lap. Her shoulders begin to slowly relax, her body untensing. Jemma can't help but wonder if it's because of the dog, or because she's been given an order she can follow.

Either way, she sits on the now empty cushion, Fitz taking a seat to her immediate left. They both turn their attention to Daisy, but she shakes her head and doesn't say anything.

One of *those* days, then.

"Remote?" Jemma asks Fitz quietly. He nods and stands up to go look for it.

It's standard protocol, they all decided, to keep each other company and watch stupid, meaningless television when one of them gets like this, because all three of them do get like this occasionally.

"Found it," Fitz says after a minute of searching. "It was on the windowsill." With that, he rejoins them on the couch and raises the remote, turning on the TV and flipping it to The Learning Channel.

Which is– quite frankly– an outrageous misnomer. Jemma thinks the only *learning* she does while watching *TLC* of all things is from a purely anthropological standpoint (which is a *soft* science, and therefore not nearly as valid as biochem).

It's fascinating. She's obsessed.

—

They're watching an episode of My Strange Addiction– a rerun, she thinks, she's fairly certain the show ended a little bit back– when Daisy suddenly speaks up.

“After I was cured, and I was in isolation–” she starts. Fitz picks up the remote and mutes the TV. “When I took the containment module up into the Zephyr, what did you think I was doing?”

Jemma has to think about it for a minute. It feels so long ago now. “I think– I thought you were hoping to head off Hive on your own, in some skewed attempt at– I don’t know, reparations? To be honest, I *didn’t* really think about it.”

“It was the same for me,” Fitz agrees. “I assumed you wanted to try and take him out yourself, but other than that I didn’t put too much thought into it. I was more focused on preventing the end of the world, *again.*”

Jemma frowns. “I don't think it *was* again. I think that might've been our first almost apocalypse.”

“No,” Fitz disagrees. “The year before that, with– *you know,*” he mutters, gesturing towards Daisy.

“*No,* she *planned* and *intended* a genocide, but didn't have the means to pull it off beyond the agents on the Iliad,” Jemma retorts quietly, feeling bad about the topic of debate, but not bad enough to let Fitz win. “*Hive* had a nuclear bomb that would've taken out Europe *and* North America. That's *leagues* more world ending than a couple hundred people.”

“I begged him to take me back,” Daisy says.

“That's–” Fitz starts. “You *what?*”

“I begged him to take me back,” Daisy says again. “When I took the containment module up into the Zephyr. I got down onto my knees

and begged him to take me back."

Jemma opens her mouth.

Jemma closes her mouth.

"...oh," is what she ends up saying.

Daisy nods, pulling Spork close to her chest and burying her face in her fur. "Oh."

Jemma flounders. What do you even *say* in this situation?

"...you were going through *withdrawal,* Daisy," she settles on, reaching down and tucking Daisy's hair behind her ear. "With nothing and nobody to help you through it. Of course you wanted the feeling back."

"You fought *back,* though. I remember feeling the quaking," Fitz adds. "What matters is that you pushed through."

Daisy shakes her head. "...no, I didn't," she says quietly. "It didn't– it didn't work."

"Of course it didn't work," Jemma reassures her. "You were incredibly weak from withdrawal, not to mention the blood loss and sleep deprivation. You *wouldn't* have been able to beat him in a fight, then. You c–"

"No," Daisy cuts her off, lifting her head up and staring at the wall across from her. "It didn't *work.*"

Jemma shares a confused look with Fitz. "We– *know,*" he says hesitantly. "We were there in the aftermath. Forgive me for this, but I'm a bit surprised you managed to last as long against him as you did."

"*No*– you don't–" Daisy abruptly stands up and sets her dog down on the ground. She turns to stand in front of them and drops to the floor like a puppet with its strings cut, then grabs both of them by the hand when they make aborted movements toward her.

"I got on my knees for him," she says, voice shaking, on her knees for them. "I let him touch me. I begged him to take me back."

She raises her head up to look at them, her eyes wide and *agonized.* "*It didn't work.*"

It clicks all at once. “He *tried?*” Jemma asks, feeling horrified and nauseous on her friend's behalf.

“Andrew– *Lash* did something to me.” She brings their joined hands forward and presses her forehead against them. “He– *took* something. From me. I couldn't– I just wanted him *back. He* wanted me back. But it didn't work.”

Spork approaches her from behind and presses up against her side. Fitz clears his throat. “That's– is that when you attacked him?”

Daisy nods miserably. “I was just so *tired.* I just wanted it to be over. It was supposed to be, it almost *was,* but Lincoln–” She swallows. “I won't– I'm not going to kill myself.”

“...that's not nearly as reassuring as I think you meant it to be, love,” Jemma says softly, bringing her free hand down and running it through Daisy's hair.

She laughs weakly. “I’m not going to kill myself, Jemma, I promise. Ask Fitz.”

Jemma turns to Fitz, eyebrows raised. He shifts in his seat. “She found me,” he says, rearranging his hand so it’s properly intertwined with Daisy’s. “Right after the Framework. She made me swear I wouldn’t–” He shrugs. “She swore as well.”

Daisy laughs again, lighter this time. “Anti suicide pact.” She looks back up at them. “I’m not going to kill myself. I don’t want to anymore, not right now. I just–” She shifts uncomfortably. “I needed to tell someone– what I did.”

Jemma knows they need to continue this conversation, has things she wants to say– particularly about that *right now* comment– but for now all she does is slide off the couch onto the floor, making sure to drag Fitz with her, and pull Daisy into her arms.

She says nothing when she feels her shoulder start to get wet, just tightens her grip.

Ten months after the Framework, Daisy wakes up with back pain.

"I'm telling you, it's that couch," Fitz insists over breakfast. "I keep telling Jemma we need to donate it and get a new one, but she insists on all the furniture *matching*."

"It's fine, Fitz," Daisy says, trying to crack her spine against her chair. "I'm probably just getting old. I think I found a grey hair the other day."

"You are not, Daisy. You're not even twenty five."

"Exactly. Practically ancient. Which makes *you* guys bags of bones."

Jemma laughs at Fitz's affronted look, then winces. "It probably *is* the couch, though, loathe as I am to admit it. We can–"

"–go couch shopping?" Daisy interjects. "I know some good thrift stores near here, and there's nothing on the schedule this Sunday."

"Don't be ridiculous, Daisy, we're not getting rid of my couch," Jemma says. "I was going to say that we can share the bedroom. Fitz and I opted for a Texas King sized mattress, so there should be more than enough room for all three of us."

Daisy pauses with her fork halfway to her open mouth, her eyes wide. Jemma takes the opportunity to start gathering up the dirty dishes and taking them over to the sink.

"...so getting a new couch is too ridiculous, but sharing a bed with a borderline married couple is *fine?*" Daisy asks, evidently flabbergasted. "Is that not *more* ridiculous?"

Jemma knows people are confused as to why she and Fitz aren't married yet. She knows they both have to field nonstop questions and comments. *So when is the wedding? Is your relationship not going well? Why hasn't he manned up and popped the question yet?*

Even Daisy asked once, if her living with them was *stagnating their relationship* or something to that effect. They assured her that wasn't the case, and she hasn't asked since.

It's not as if they don't want to get married. They both do, more than anything. It just wouldn't– *feel* right. Not right now. Neither of them know what it is, but they both agree that there's something that doesn't feel right. Getting married would be *wrong* until they figure out what it is.

"S'not ridiculous if we're asking you," Fitz says around a mouthful of toast. "Besides," he continues, swallowing. "Jemma n' I have already discussed it at length. This isn't some spur of the moment impulse suggestion."

"It's not," Daisy intones. "You have?"

"Your back has been hurting you for months, love," Jemma adds, leaning back against the counter. "This is just the first time you've said anything about it."

"Uh–" Daisy starts. "Okay?"

"Is that a question or you agreeing to share?" Fitz asks.

"That's me agreeing to *try* it," she says. "You guys reserve the right to kick me out if I like– hog the blankets, or snore or something."

"We won't, even if you do, but okay." Jemma checks her watch. "Oh, good grief, I had to leave ten minutes ago. Do you two mind finishing up with the dishes?"

They both stand and start gathering up the remaining plates and silverware. "We've got them," Fitz reassures. "Go ahead."

Jemma nods and darts forward to give him a kiss on the lips, before turning to Daisy and giving her a goodbye kiss as well, right next to the corner of her mouth.

"I love you both. Don't forget to walk the dog," Jemma calls, pulling on her shoes and jacket and heading out the door. "I'll see you at work in a bit!"

They don't have the same work schedules anymore, at least right now. It's mandated by their therapists, something about them both needing the stability of a quiet morning routine. It's subject to change in the future, but for now, Fitz and Daisy get to start their work days two hours after she does.

She knows Daisy still gets up and goes into base very early most days– today was somewhat of an anomaly– if only to train with May, but Fitz has embraced the schedule change wholeheartedly. It's been nice, seeing him at so much peace.

She's looking forward to tonight, *after* work. She likes her job, loves it even (she'd say she wouldn't be doing it otherwise, but she honestly

isn't sure she'd be *allowed* to leave, even if she wanted to. So.), but today she can't wait until the work day ends, and she can go home to her Daisy and Fitz.

—

That evening, as Jemma and Fitz are going through their nighttime routine, Daisy tentatively knocks on the door frame, pillow and blanket in hand and Spork following closely at her heels.

"Hey, can we come in?"

"You don't have to ask, Daisy," Jemma reassures. "This is your room too, now."

"Right." Daisy shuffles into the room and looks around awkwardly. "Nice– uh– nice place– you've got here."

Fitz gives her a confused look as he heads to the bathroom to brush his teeth. "What are you doing? Why are you acting like you've never been in here before?"

"I don't know, man," Daisy groans. "This is awkward. This is awkward, right? I'm just gonna go sleep on the couch again."

She turns to leave, but Jemma reaches out and catches her by the arm. "No, you're not. You'll kill your back even more than you already have."

Daisy turns in her hold and brandishes her finger at her. “Hey, no. I'm an adult, Jemma. If I want to kill my back then I'll kill my back. You can't just bat your eyelashes at me and get me to do whatever you want.”

Jemma wraps her arms around Daisy's waist and does exactly that.

“Yeah, how's that working out for you?” Fitz calls from the bathroom. Daisy groans.

“This has to count as psychological warfare or something,” she mutters as she lets herself be pulled into the room, then speaks up. “You're sure neither of you mind?”

“It's not like you're just barging in,” Jemma says. “We're offering, love.”

Daisy searches at her face for a second, before finally relenting. “Yeah,

okay. But I get the right side."

—

Jemma blinks her eyes open, only to immediately slam them shut again against the harsh rays of the early morning sun streaming in through the window. She groans and buries her face further into Fitz's shoulder, her fingers twitching where they're resting against his stomach.

She's still half asleep when she hums against his warm skin and slips her hand underneath the hem of his sleep shirt, starting to lightly trace the tips of her fingers up and down the planes of his abdomen.

She runs her hand up over his abdominal muscles, skimming over the hair on his lower stomach. She pauses when she feels the characteristically rough tissue of a scar on his ribcage. Fitz doesn't have a scar there. Or does he? She dismisses the thought and continues her hand's path upwards, blaming the confusion on her half asleep state when–

Oh. *Oooooh.* It's Daisy.

Jemma, now fully awake, immediately halts her movements once she knows it's not actually her boyfriend she's doing them to. Still, she doesn't remove her hand just yet, just shifts it a bit lower. She likes to take any chance she can get to be physically affectionate with Daisy.

Daisy is– well, she's– Hunter once likened her to a former shelter dog. It was meant as a joke, a lighthearted dig at her Inhuman biology and anatomy, but he wasn't necessarily *wrong* in the comparison. Daisy is skittish and avoidant about affection and intimacy on the best of days, so this right here, with her curled up in Jemma's arms and their legs intertwined, is nice.

"...dn't stop," the woman in question slurs, clearly still mostly asleep. "...feels nice." Jemma laughs quietly into the skin of her shoulder.

"I'm not, don't worry," she assures, restarting her movements.

She's noticing more, now that she's properly awake, like Fitz's form pressed up behind her, his arms heavy and comforting around her waist. "Morning," he whispers. "Did you think she was me?"

"Maybe," Jemma confirms, rotating her torso to look at him. "I'm not used to you being the big spoon. I got confused."

"Don't make fun of me," he says. "I like being cradled, okay? It–"

“–makes up for your sad, empty childhood, yes, I know.” Jemma rolls her eyes. "Stop pouting."

"I'm *not*–"

Daisy groans, cutting him off. "Oh my *Gooood,* both of you shut *uuuuuup,*" she whines, rolling over onto her side and turning her back to both of them. Jemma's hand slides off her body and lands on the mattress between them. "S’too early for this."

"Shouldn't you be used to getting up this early?" Fitz asks. "Considering you've been doing it for years to train with Agent May."

"*Yeah,* and I always hate every second of it," Daisy huffs into her pillow. "How would *you* like getting up early as sin every morning just to get the shit beat out of you? It *sucks.*"

"Awww, poor baby," Jemma coos in fake sympathy, reaching out and rubbing her on the back.

Daisy growls. "Yeah, yeah, whatever. Mock me at your peril.” She shivers and shifts so she's lying on her stomach, giving Jemma easier access. “Just don't stop doing that."

“Don't *growl* at me and I won't,” Jemma chides, absolutely, one hundred percent not meaning it. She always loves seeing Inhumans give in to their– for lack of a better term, so forgive her for this– *baser instincts.* Doubly so when it's Daisy, though she doesn't entirely know *why,* exactly. She just likes it when her friend is her authentic self, she thinks.

Daisy huffs again and rotates slightly to briefly glare over her shoulder, but she doesn't say anything further.

“Have you always been this mean in the morning?” Fitz asks her, resting his chin on Jemma’s shoulder. “We lived on a *plane* together. How have we never seen this before?”

“You've never seen me *first thing* in the morning. Ask May about it sometime,” she says, voice muffled by her pillow. “*You* invited me to sleep here, man. Either you can get used to it or *you* can go sleep on the couch.”

“*Wh*– are you threatening to kick me out of *my own bed?*”

“Yes.”

Jemma snickers, her palm caressing up and down Daisy's back over and over again, until her entire body loosens and relaxes again, and a deep rumbling sound starts up in her throat.

“*God,* I hate it when this happens,” she groans, voice somewhat garbled by the involuntary vibrations. “It totally kills my tough guy personality.”

“Who's a good kitty?” Fitz immediately teases, reaching around Jemma to pinch Daisy on the cheek.

“Oh, fuck off.” Daisy smacks his hand away. “...me.”

“Well, *actually,*” Jemma starts, barely resisting the urge to raise an index finger and push her non-existent glasses up her nose while she monologues. “Kree– and therefore Inhumans as well– are canidae, or rather that's the closest Earth equivalent as far as SHIELD scientists are able to tell. So, while yes, Daisy does purr, would it not be more apt to call her pup–”

“Oooh-*kay!*” Daisy says, cutting her off. The tips of her ears are flushed purple. “We don't need to talk about it like that.”

Jemma frowns. “Can I talk about it later, at least? I think it's interesting.”

Daisy holds up a thumbs up over her shoulder and laughs quietly. “Yes, Simmons. You can infodump to me later. Can we just lay here for now, though?”

Jemma hums in agreement and continues running her hand up and down Daisy's back, absentmindedly tracing her favorite constellations and leaning back into Fitz’s embrace.

She initially thinks nothing of it when her fingers catch on the hem of Daisy's shirt, causing it to ride up. It's not until she catches sight of a jagged patch of lighter colored skin that she pauses. What is..?

Jemma props herself up on her elbow and reaches her hand down to lightly touch it with the tips of her fingers. Daisy freezes, and the rumbling instantly cuts off. She feels Fitz prop himself up as well behind her.

She removes her hand and grabs the hem of the shirt instead. "Can

I..?"

"It's okay," Daisy says, voice deceptively light. “Go ahead.”

"Is it *actually* okay, or is that just what you think we *want* you to say?" Fitz asks, as Jemma toys with the hem of the shirt.

Daisy turns her head in their direction and looks up at them through her lashes. “It's actually okay,” she confirms, smiling softly. “I trust you both.”

Consent given, Jemma inches her hand up Daisy's back, sliding her shirt up as she goes. She inhales sharply when it reaches the top of her spine, and hears Fitz sit up fully behind her.

“*Jesus,*” he breathes. Daisy huffs out a laugh.

“Right?” She grins weakly and folds her arms underneath her head. “It's bad, isn't it?”

Bad is an understatement. Daisy's back is, simply put, covered in scars. Some look more recent than others, but most of them are pale and faded enough that they have to be years old, though they still stand out in stark contrast against her light brown skin.

Jemma– intentionally avoiding bringing any attention to the Lichtenberg scars on Daisy's shoulder– traces over one of the newer looking scars, a divot on her right shoulder blade. It can't be more than a year old, a year and a half maybe. It's still slightly pink around the edges.

“Watchdog, with a knife,” Daisy murmurs. “I had a concussion, and he got a lucky shot in. It hurt like hell.”

“You remember what all of them are from?” Fitz asks in disbelief.

She shrugs. “Most of them. It's hard to forget, sometimes.”

“Did you get him back, at least?” Jemma asks. She doesn't like thinking about Daisy's time on her own, but she hates not knowing even more.

Daisy laughs. “Threw him through a wall.”

“*Good.*”

“Can I ask what this one is from?” Fitz asks, reaching his hand out and

lightly touching Daisy's side, where there's a small, purplish dent of a scar. She winces.

“One of my foster families had this dog who *hated* me. I'm convinced that thing wanted me dead. It was one of those small, yappy ones, like it couldn't have weighed more than fifteen pounds, but *Christ,* once it got its teeth in it did *not* let go.” She rolls her eyes. “And of course it was always *my* fault when I got bit. I should've punted that demon like a football when I had the chance.”

Jemma, purposely ignoring *that* statement, picks one next, tapping one on the small of her back. It's relatively small, but incredibly jagged nonetheless. Daisy laughs.

“Fell through a window at a party when I was seventeen. I was wasted as hell. It was honestly kind of embarrassing, I bled *everywhere.* I don't know how it's not bigger.”

“What about these?” Fitz asks, moving his fingers up to the top of her back, where there's a collection of small raised lines grouped together, right between her shoulder blades. Daisy goes still.

“There was a nun,” she begins haltingly. “At the orphanage. Sister Lucille. She wasn't there for very long, only a couple of months. When I was– nine, I think? Maybe ten.”

She swallows. “She was *really* old, and traditional, and– uh– and *Catholic.* I mean– we *all* were, but she was *Catholic* Catholic, y’know? The– um– the self-flagellation kind.”

Jemma feels her stomach drop. “Are you saying she made you–?”

Daisy nods into her folded arms. “I think there was something legitimately wrong with her. Like– in the head. *None* of the nuns liked me very much– except Sister McKenna, and there was only so much she could do– but they all thought Sister Lucille went too far. I think it's only ‘cause she went after the other kids, too, though.”

Jemma opens her mouth to say something, but Fitz shakes his head, so she moves on. “What about this one?” She asks instead, stroking her thumb over the largest one, following it all the way from the top of her spine to her hip. It's also clearly the oldest one she can see; not only is the non-scarred skin around it stretched and slightly warped, the scar itself is pale and faded as well.

Daisy falls silent. She stays that way for a long, long time. After a

minute Jemma hears Spork get up from her spot at the foot of the bed and make her way over to Daisy, shoving her snout underneath her hand. The sun has moved in its position in the sky when she finally answers.

“I had to get surgery for that one,” she says eventually. “I was seven.”

Jemma frowns. “That doesn't look like a surgical scar.”

“...that's not what I said,” Daisy says quietly. “Can we change the subject?”

Jemma pulls her shirt back down in response and lays back down on her side, wrapping her arms around Daisy's waist.

“Thank you,” she says, relief evident in her voice.

“Of course,” Jemma says. “Should we get up, or do you want to keep cuddling?”

“It's my day *off,* Jemma,” Daisy groans. “I'm not getting up until I absolutely have to.”

“Agreed,” Fitz sighs, flopping onto his stomach and throwing his arm back over Jemma’s side, his hand landing on Daisy's hip.

Jemma nods in acquiescence and tightens her arms around Daisy, pressing her face into her shoulder. *She'd* love to get up– she has a lot of work to do– but this is nice, nice enough that she's willing to procrastinate on things she really oughtn’t procrastinate on. It's *fine.* What'll they do, fire her?

HA! As *if.*

...maybe she's been spending too much time with Daisy.

Eleven months after the Framework, Jemma wakes up with a cough, a runny nose, and a fever of thirty nine degrees.

The first thing she does, once she realizes just how awful she feels, is draw her knees up to her chest, spin around on her back, and use her feet to shove Daisy out of the bed.

“What the ***FUCK!***” Daisy shouts when she hits the floor. Spork starts barking, and it all causes Fitz to flinch so hard that he falls out of his side of the bed as well, landing on the ground with an identical thump.

“*I'm armed!*” He yells reflexively, before his mind evidently starts to catch up. “What's going on?”

“I don't know!” She hears Daisy reply. “Spork, *hush.* I think Jemma might've had a nightmare. She just shoved me out of the bed.”

“Out,” Jemma rasps, then devolves into a coughing fit. She rolls over and tries to cough into her pillow instead of the open air, and both of them fall silent. She feels the bed dip as they both kneel over her.

“Jemma? Are you okay?” Fitz asks softly. “Did you have a night terror?”

“*Out,*” She repeats, pointing in Daisy's general direction. “Immunocompromised. Get out. Go t’Mack’s.”

There's a pause.

“...are you sick?” Daisy asks tentatively.

Jemma cracks one eye open and glares at the blurry forms of the two of them hovering above her. “Are *you* deaf? *Out.*"

Fitz exhales a laugh and leans back. “You heard the woman. Are you good to pack your things and head to Mack's for a bit?”

Daisy sighs. “...yeah, I'll text him. Keep me updated?”

“Of course.”

Jemma lets her eyes slip shut again as Fitz and Daisy start puttering around the room, Daisy packing a bag and Fitz likely collecting supplies to deal with her.

After a couple of minutes of them rummaging around and Jemma simultaneously coughing up a lung, sneezing her head off, and desperately trying to keep everything aimed *away* from her immunocompromised roommate, Daisy breaks the silence.

“Mack is cool with me staying for a couple of days. He also says he hopes you feel better, Jemma.”

Jemma acknowledges that with a thumbs up and a strangled sound of generalized discomfort.

She hears Daisy and Fitz both laugh softly. “Guess I should get going, then,” Daisy says quietly.

“You really should've left the second you knew she was sick,” Fitz says. “Why are you still here, actually?”

She can't make out the rest of their conversation, just the rise and fall of their voices as they leave the bedroom and make their way through the apartment and to the front door. She likes hearing them talk to each other. She likes that they're friends. It's rather nice, she thinks, that her best friends are each other's best friends as well.

She winces and buries her head in her pillow when the front door slams as (presumably) Daisy leaves. She thinks she hears a muffled apology shouted through the apartment walls, but she can't be one hundred percent sure.

After another minute the bedroom door creaks open, and Fitz reenters the room. “Hi,” he whispers. “How are you feeling?”

“Not great,” she groans. “I think I have a fever.”

“I have the thermometer right here, if you give me a second.” Fitz sets something down on top of the dresser, a tray she thinks, then approaches the bed, sitting down on it next to her head. “Alright, open.”

Jemma lets her mouth fall open, closing it around the thermometer when Fitz puts it in. He pulls it back out after a second when it beeps. “One oh two degrees fahrenheit. That's– uh…” he trails off.

“Thirty nine degrees,” Jemma slurs, half delirious. “Git gud, scrub.”

“Okay, Daisy really needs to stop teaching you things. That's just unsettling,” Fitz mutters. He gets up for a second, and she hears the rattle of a pill bottle when he comes back. “Here's some tylenol. Sit up for a second?”

He helps her sit up and swallow some pills, before he lies her back down and tucks her back into bed. “Try to get some more sleep. I'll check back in in a bit, okay?”

She's out before he finishes his sentence.

—

Jemma wakes up again an indeterminate amount of time later. All she knows is that the sun is low in the sky, everything hurts, and she's absolutely drenched in sweat.

She groans and rolls over, halfheartedly attempting to untangle herself from Daisy's blanket, which has somehow managed to get completely wrapped around her body.

She succeeds in her goal after a couple minutes and tentatively sits up, wincing when the pain in her head spikes. She shifts to the edge of the bed after a minute and stands up, almost falling over before she braces on the bedside table.

Fitz is sitting at the kitchen table when she exits the bedroom, working on his laptop. He looks up at her when she closes the door behind her.

“Hey,” he greets. “How are you feeling now?”

“A bit better. I think my fever's broken,” she replies. “How long was I asleep?”

“Most of the day. I just made myself dinner, would you like some?”

“Yes, actually. Thank you,” Jemma says as she settles in one of the dining room chairs. Fitz stands up, making his way into the kitchen and rummaging through the cabinets. “What did you make?”

“Chicken noodle soup.” He gestures to a pot on the stove. “Daisy recommended it.”

“I think she meant for *me,* Fitz.”

He colors. “...I wanted chicken noodle soup.”

Jemma laughs, then winces at the pain it causes. She drops her head onto the table and groans. Everything *aches.*

—

Later, after she’s eaten her dinner– and then promptly thrown it right back up– Jemma lays on the couch with her feet thrown over Fitz’s lap and an icepack on her forehead.

“This is nice, isn’t it?” Fitz asks. Jemma coughs pointedly. “I mean–

disregarding your sickness– it's nice to get some alone time, without Daisy here, right?"

Jemma frowns and thinks about it. She knows what she should say. What she's *supposed* to say. She's supposed to agree, say that they should find time for just the two of them more often, maybe suggest that they tell Daisy to finally find her own place. Instead, when she opens her mouth, what comes out is:

"Not particularly. I miss her."

Fitz's shoulders slump in relief. "Oh, thank God. I didn't want to be the one to say it."

"We should call her," she says, as he's already pulling his phone out of his pocket.

Daisy answers on the second ring. "*Hello?*"

"Hi, Daisy," Jemma says. "We miss you."

"*Oh! Uh–*" she stutters, the way she always does when faced with affection. Jemma finds it ridiculously endearing. "*I can be over there in like twenty minutes if–*"

"Daisy Louise Johnson, if you come home while I'm still sick I will kill you."

"*Jesus Christ,*" Daisy exclaims.

"Bit much there, Jem," Fitz whispers, patting her on the leg and standing up to grab her next dose of medication.

"Right, sorry."

"*It's okay. I know you're feeling weird.*"

She really *is.* Jemma sniffs, slightly horrified to find herself tearing up a bit. She hates being sick. This is *awful.*

"*How long are you contagious?*" Daisy asks.

"Five to seven days. Is Mack okay with you staying that long?"

"*I mean, I don't know why he wouldn't be. He's just glad he has somebody to team up with against Yoyo in Smash. She's weirdly cracked at it.*"

“I don’t know what that means,” Jemma sighs. “I miss you, Daisy.”

Daisy is silent for a moment. “*...I miss you too.*”

One year after the Framework, Jemma finally puts the pieces together.

It starts at work, because of course it does. Everything starts at work for them. She doesn't think there's a single SHIELD employee who knows the meaning of *work-life balance,* her included.

Jemma's at her desk, staring dejectedly at the stacks and stacks of paperwork on it, when Paul, a relatively newer (in the grand scheme of things, at least. They joined post-Framework) lab tech– young, bright hair (she thinks Daisy said something about green hair and adjectives? She doesn't know what that means), *very* intelligent, maybe too intelligent actually– enters the lab.

“Morning, Agent Simmons,” they greet, taking off their jacket, dropping it at their workstation, and pulling on their lab coat.

“Good morning, Paul. How was your weekend?”

“*Great.*” They approach her desk and lean on it, grinning. “I had a date with this bear, right? *Super* hot. We ended up hooki–”

“*Okay!*” Jemma cuts them off with a grimace. “I don't need to know the details.”

Paul laughs, and Jemma smiles slightly. She likes Paul. They remind her a bit of her and Fitz at that age, but also– at the same exact time– very much of Daisy.

"So, how are things going for Ms. and Mr. Simmons?" They ask.

"Daisy and Fitz? Oh, they're doing well! Fitz has taken up painting lately. He's kind of awful at it, but don't tell him I said that. I think it's rather charming. And Daisy has been doing a lot of reading lately. I swear, I barely see her face anymore, it's– what is it?"

Paul is staring at her. So are several of the other lab techs. "Er– I was asking about Fitz and *you,* actually," they clarify. Someone coughs

awkwardly.

"Oh," Jemma says. She tries to busy herself with her work, if only to distract from her burning face. "Well, then you should've said *Dr.* and Mr. Simmons."

"I'll keep that in mind for next time," they say, giving her a weird look. "So– uh– is that a *thing?* You and Fitz and Agent Johnson? Because no judgment from me if it is."

"What? No, of course not!" She sputters. "What would ever give you that idea?"

"Maybe the way I said Ms. and Mr. Simmons and you automatically assumed that I was talking about Agent Johnson instead of you?"

"Paul, there's nothing going on between Daisy and Fitz and me," Jemma laughs. "I honestly don't know how you could even think there is."

"Okaaay." Paul narrows their eyes at her. "But she *does* live with you."

"Yes."

"For over a year."

"The anniversary just passed."

"In your one bedroom apartment?"

Jemma drops her papers onto the table and straightens up, looking over at Paul with raised eyebrows. "What are you trying to insinuate?"

"Nothing, nothing!" Paul throws their hands up in acquiescence.

"Then get back to *work,* please."

"Yeah, yeah, okay," they grumble, shuffling back to their workstation, but pause when they get there. "Sorry, you refer to the day she moved in as your *anniversary?*"

"*An* anniversary," Jemma corrects. “Work, *now.*”

“Yes, ma’am,” they mutter sarcastically, leaning over their microscope and finally doing what they're *supposed* to be doing instead of bugging her.

Jemma starts shuffling through her papers, idly listening to the quiet chatter of the lab workers around her, when–

"It's just– where does she *sleep?*"

She sighs, slightly frustrated. "Like you said, it's a one bedroom. She sleeps with us, obviously."

"Right. *Obviously*."

Jemma doesn't bother dignifying that one with a response.

—

The first sign that something is off is Spork, asleep on the couch with no Daisy in sight. Even when she's not on the clock, Spork is always right at her owner's heels. It *would* be cute, Jemma thinks, if that dog didn't hold her in contempt.

Spork's head pops up and her tail starts to thump against the couch when she hears the door click shut, but as soon as she sees that it's Jemma, and *not* her favorite person, she heaves an unnecessarily heavy sigh (as dogs are wont to do) and lays her head back down, her wagging slowly petering out.

Jemma and the dog have a very grudging dynamic with each other.

"Spork," she greets with narrowed eyes. Normally she wouldn't think much of seeing Spork by herself– Daisy could just be in the restroom or something– but she's already been having a very weird day, and she just wants to see Daisy and Fitz already.

So seeing Spork by herself– it's– something feels *off,* in the apartment.

She takes her shoes off, making sure to put them away properly, and steps in past the entryway, listening for any sign that anyone else is home. She's on the couch, about to settle in and turn on the television, when she hears a noise come from the bedroom. She stands up and makes her way down the hallway.

Fitz and Daisy have always been physically affectionate with each other, for as long as they've been friends, she thinks. They're best friends, ones who they live together, so Jemma initially thinks nothing of it when she cracks the bedroom door open and spots them sitting next to each other at the foot of the bed, with very little space in between them.

Or– *no* space in between them, actually.

What are they–?

Oh.

Um–

Jemma immediately turns around and shuts the door behind her as quietly as she can. Normally, Daisy would've felt her vibrations the second she stepped into the apartment. Jemma shutting the door, no matter how softly she did it, should've been a dead giveaway that she'd seen them, but Daisy's evidently a bit– *preoccupied.*

She lowers herself to the floor and watches the closed bedroom door across from her, staring so hard she's half expecting herself to spontaneously gain X-ray vision and be able to see through it.

She *wants* to see through it, she realizes with a jolt. She wants to open the door, wants to join them, wants them to do it again.

Which is *not* the normal reaction to walking in on your partner kissing your shared best friend, she knows.

She knows what she's expected to do in this situation. She's supposed to burst into the room, interrupt their torrid affair, scream and cry, and throw them both out with a big speech about betrayal or something. She's *supposed* to be upset about this. Rather crucially, in fact.

But her and Fitz's relationship has never been exactly *typical.* They've been through so much, only to come out stronger together on the other side. This is nothing in the face of everything that's happened to them already. She's sure they'll get through this, however it may be.

And it's certainly not like she *blames* Fitz. Daisy is obviously beautiful. And *smart,* no matter what she leads people to believe. And kind. And funny, and handsome, and *very* muscular, and–

Okay.

So Paul might've been correct. There *might* actually be something going on there.

She closes her eyes and pictures the few brief seconds she saw before she shut the door.

It was a relatively chaste kiss from what she saw, but only just. She could see the way the sides of their legs were pressed together, ankle to thigh, the way Fitz's hands were in fists on his knees and Daisy's were curled around the blanket by her sides, like they were just barely restraining themselves from grabbing onto each other.

Jemma buries her face in her hands, her flushed skin warm against her palms. *Jesus,* this is making her feel like she's back in secondary school.

The sound she heard starts up again. They're talking, she thinks. She can hear the soft murmur of their conversation.

"*–mistake,*" she thinks one of them says. "We need to tell Jemma right now."

"I know," the other replies. "I'll call her."

Jemma stands up then, hoping to prevent having to explain why she was waiting right outside the room like a creep, and approaches the door, pausing right in front of it. The voices have stopped. It seems Daisy has finally realized she's here.

She– like always– doesn't look surprised when Jemma opens the door, but Fitz has a startled look on his face. They're sitting on the foot of the bed, several feet of space between them. They're on complete opposite ends of the mattress, actually. They both look like they're about to fall off with how far apart they are.

"Jemma?" Fitz questions. "How long have you been home?"

"Long enough."

Daisy's eyes fall shut while Fitz's face crumples.

"Oh," he says weakly. "So you..?"

"Saw you?" She asks. "Yes."

"*I'm sorry,*" he breathes, fists clenched by his sides. "I'm so sorry, Jemma. It doesn't– I didn't–"

"I kissed him," Daisy interrupts, not looking at either of them. "If you get angry at anyone, it should be me."

"Daisy–" Fitz stands up. "Jemma– that's not– it was a *mistake.* I wasn't– we weren't thinking."

Jemma shakes her head. She knows Fitz like the back of her hand, knows him better than she knows herself sometimes. She knows when he's not telling the whole truth, when he's hiding something, even from himself.

And even though Daisy is harder to read– intentional on her part– Jemma *knows* her. Has known her for years, lived with her in close quarters for a large amount of it. She can pick up on what she's not saying.

She knows it was more than just a spur-of-the-moment thing done out of impulse, no matter what they tell her, tell *themselves.* The more she thinks about it, the more she's starting to believe that something like this was inevitable. She thinks it always would've happened eventually, maybe even with her instead of Fitz.

It makes sense, doesn't it? Daisy has always been there with them. So many times, their relationship wouldn't have progressed or even *happened* if it weren't for her. She's already a part of them, isn't she? She has been for a while. Just not in the way Jemma thinks any of them *want* her to be.

"I'm not upset," she tells them, cutting off Fitz's harried attempts at explaining.

He blinks at her. "You're– not?"

Jemma shakes her head as she begins to take off her outer layers. Daisy eyes her with skepticism, her shoulders tense. "I'm sorry, did you miss the part where I *kissed your boyfriend?*"

"No, I saw," she confirms, turning around so she can hang her jacket up in the closet. "Rather enjoyed it actually."

The room goes quiet. Jemma, with her back still to them, grins.

"You–" Daisy starts, then abruptly falls silent again.

"*So,*" Jemma emphasizes, turning back around and leaning against the dresser, bracing her hands on the top of it behind her. "Don't let me interrupt."

They stare at her in silence.

"So– just to clarify," Daisy says, eyebrows furrowed. "You want me to kiss your boyfriend. Again. In front of you. So you can– *watch?*"

"Yes."

"Right, okay." She nods. "Um– is this some sort of weird guilt trip thing?"

"No, you'll know when she's guilt tripping you," Fitz says, eyeing Jemma dubiously. "I think she might be serious about this." He takes a few steps closer to her and searches her face. “*Are* you serious about this?” He asks quietly.

Jemma feels herself soften. She reaches out and cradles his face, pulling him in for a kiss. “Deadly,” she assures. “Aren't you?”

He blinks when she pulls away. “*Oh,*” he exhales, something dawning in his eyes. “I am, aren't I?”

She grins at him and lightly shoves him by his shoulders, sending him back a few steps until he hits the foot of the bed again. He laughs as his knees buckle inward and he's forced to sit back down.

“*Okay,* this is starting to feel an awful lot like foreplay,” Daisy declares. “Should I leave?”

“No, no, just–” Fitz says, turning to face her. “Stay right there.”

Daisy nods hesitantly, not moving at all as Fitz scoots closer. Her eyes dart over to Jemma once he reaches her, seeking some sort of approval. Jemma watches in anticipation.

It's hesitant at first, just a soft press of their lips against each other, both of them clearly still slightly unsure about it.

That doesn't last long.

Fitz brings his right hand up and lays it on the left side of Daisy's neck, lightly stroking his thumb over a spot just underneath and behind her ear. She tenses, initially, and shudders, but starts to relax in increments after a moment, eventually bringing her own hand up and layering it over his.

Jemma exhales sharply through her nose when they press closer to each other, starting to transition into openmouthed kissing. She pushes herself off the dresser and approaches the bed, but she doesn’t think either of them notice.

It’s not until she partially kneels onto the mattress, reaching out her

hand and lightly tracing her finger over the pointed tip of Daisy's ear, that they break away from each other. Jemma twines her fingers through Fitz's.

"Sorry," Daisy says, her face slowly turning the reddish-purple hue Inhumans turn when they blush. The ear Jemma touched is pinned back against the side of her head. "That's– sorry."

"For what?" Fitz asks, grabbing her by the hand with his free one.

Daisy stares down at his hand for a second, then looks up at him with an incredulous look on her face. "Dude, maybe the fact that I just *made out* with my *best friend's boyfriend?* If you guys just wanna like– *experiment* or something that's fine, but I'm–"

Jemma cups the back of Daisy's neck and pulls her in, pressing their lips together. Daisy tenses for a moment, then goes lax all at once.

And oh.

Oh.

Oh, this is it, isn't it? This is what was missing the entire time. This, right here– Daisy soft and pliant, half underneath her, Fitz's hands intertwined with both of theirs.

She opens her eyes then, turning her head slightly in Fitz's direction to try and make eye contact, needs to see if he's *getting* it like she is. He stares right back at her, a soft look on his face as he tightens his grip on her hand.

Jemma pulls away and sits up on her knees, reaching out and taking Daisy's face in between her hands, forcing her to crane her head back to make eye contact. "We love you. We're *in* love with you."

Daisy blinks up at her, eyes wide in shock. "I–" she cuts herself off, pressing her lips together. "Mm." Her brows furrow for a second before she rests her forehead against Jemma's collarbone and wraps a hand around her bicep.

Jemma is confused for a second, but she huffs out a laugh when she feels morse code against her arm, in the form of rhythmic buzzing coming from Daisy's fingertips. She quickly translates it in her head.

.-.. --- ...- . / -.-- --- ..-

LOVE YOU

"I love you too, Daisy," she hears Fitz add softly. When she looks over she sees that Daisy's other hand is around his wrist, presumably relaying the same message it is to her.

She pulls Daisy in by the face and kisses her, just to pull away and kiss her again, and again, and again. “I love you,” she says. “Inordinately.” She laughs suddenly. “We've lived together for over a year. *Jesus,* we sleep in the same bed. How did none of us see it sooner?”

Fitz and Daisy join in on her laughter, and Daisy collapses backwards onto the bed, pulling them both with her. They lay there, so thoroughly intertwined that Jemma can't tell where they begin and she begins. They're both half draped over Daisy, Jemma's head on her chest and her lying in the crook of Fitz's arm, and all of their legs entangled.

Jemma maps the constellations in the glow-in-the-dark stickers on the ceiling, the ones Fitz and Daisy put up a couple of weeks ago while she supervised.

“This is probably a great time to mention that time Fitz and I hooked up while you were on Maveth,” Daisy says abruptly.

Jemma instinctively flinches at the name, a knee jerk reaction even all this time (and therapy) later, then jerks her head around to make eye contact. “You *what?* Why did neither of you tell me about this?”

They both have vaguely guilty expressions on their faces. “There's not much to *say,* really,” Fitz begins hesitantly. “It was kind of–”

“–*awful,* it was awful,” Daisy interrupts. She and Fitz both wince in unison. “We were both crying by the end. I think we might've both been pretending the other person was *you,* actually.”

That's–

Okay.

“I– don't know how to deal with that,” Jemma admits.

“Yeah, why do you think we don't talk about it?”

She shakes her head, resolving to herself to bring it back up at a later date. For now she just turns her head so her ear is pressed up against

the junction of Daisy's fourth and fifth ribs and listens to her Inhumanly fast heart rate. It would be deeply worrying if it were anyone else, but Jemma finds it soothing when it's her.

She's listened to it go from a rapid (for Daisy, so lethal for pretty much anyone else) rate, back down to its usual BPM of 220, when Daisy speaks up.

"...are you sure?"

"Of what?" She asks. She feels Fitz shift.

"That you want– whatever this is," Daisy says. "I don't have the best track record when it comes to stuff like this."

"Daisy," Jemma starts, sitting up so she can look at her properly. "I can't speak one hundred percent confidently for Fitz–"

"You can," Fitz cuts in, and Jemma laughs. Daisy smiles slightly.

"Okay, speaking one hundred percent confidently for Fitz, I *promise* you we both want this."

Daisy sits up and tentatively kisses her. "I lo–" She cuts herself off and pulls back, screwing her eyes shut and shaking her head. "I'm sorry."

Jemma doesn't know why she has such a hard time saying it, only that she *does.* She wasn't always like that. She wonders what happened, who's to blame for that wound.

"It's okay," she assures her as Fitz joins them, giving Daisy a kiss of his own. She cradles her face between her hands, laughing softly as she begins to purr.

"We have time."

End Notes

Daisy and Fitz: Oh my GOD what did we just DO we're both so awful we're the worst people EVER

Jemma behind the door:

Yes there is a second chapter to this that is literally just smut. No it will never leave my drafts LMAO

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